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October 16, 1995

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Mr. William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Re: Policies and Rules Concerning
Children's Television Programming
MM Docket No. 93-48

OCT 16 1995

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Caton:

Transmitted herewith on behalf of Children's Broadcasting Corporation is the original plus nine (9) copies of its "Comments" in the above-referenced proceeding.

This material is respectfully directed to the attention of the Commission. Sufficient copies are provided for distribution to each Commissioner.

Should any questions arise concerning this matter, please contact this office directly.

Very truly yours,


Ellen S. Mandell

Enclosure

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OCT 16 1995

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
)
Policies and Rules Concerning) MM Docket No. 93-48
Children's Television Programming)

To: The Commission

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

COMMENTS

Children's Broadcasting Corporation ("CBC"), pursuant to Section 1.415(a) of the Commission's rules, hereby submits its comments in the above-captioned proceeding.

1. By the instant proceeding, the Commission seeks comment on methods to strengthen its rules implementing the Children's Television Act of 1990 ("CTA"). The Commission has asked that interested parties submit information and materials which could be of assistance in increasing the amount of educational and informational broadcast programming for children, in furtherance of the Congressional mandate set forth in the CTA. An option the Commission has raised is a "program sponsorship concept," which would credit television broadcasters for sponsoring children's programming broadcast on other stations.

2. CBC, a Minnesota-based corporation founded in 1990, develops, produces, broadcasts, and distributes by satellite a 24-hour-per-day national children's radio network. CBC supports the program sponsorship concept, with certain modifications set forth below. Specifically, CBC urges the Commission to expand the program sponsorship concept, to accord credit to television stations that sponsor children's programming on radio.

3. CBC states in its formal mission statement:

Our mission is to entertain and educate children and their families through positive multimedia programming and products. We will always be responsive to the future needs of children.

In pursuit of this mission, CBC operates a 24-hour-a-day, satellite-distributed children's network, known as "Radio AAHS®," across the country. Over the five years of its existence, CBC's network has grown to the point where it now reaches approximately 30% of the nation's population. CBC is carried by more than two-dozen owned or affiliated radio stations, of which 23 are in the Top 100 radio markets, and five of which are in the Top 10 markets. CBC also publishes, in partnership with a subsidiary of Time Warner, Inc., "Radio AAHS® Magazine," a glossy monthly that includes a free compact disc ("CD") with every issue^{1/}. In addition, Radio AAHS® has an interactive site on the World Wide Web.

4. The programming offered by Radio AAHS® is specifically designed to educate, inform, and entertain children, thus expanding the mandate of the CTA to the radio band. Radio AAHS® programs a mix of children's music, stories, news and current events, interactive quizzes, interviews and discussions aimed at educating, informing, and entertaining its young audience. The Radio AAHS® disc jockeys include a team of children who are on the air live, after school and on weekends. Among the program offerings are

^{1/}A sample copy of Radio AAHS Magazine, including the CD, is attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

"Avenue A", which takes listeners to a make-believe destination each weekday; "The Kinetic City Super Crew," a weekly science adventure independently produced by the American Association for the Advancement of Science; "Storytime," which features classic stories; "Evening Theatre," which features historical dramatizations, adventure stories, and even fairy tales; and "The Radio AAHS® Countdown," a Top 20 countdown of the most popular children's music. CBC also presents two programs in partnership with The Walt Disney Company: "Disneyland Live," which is broadcast from Disneyland in Anaheim, California, each Saturday; and "Live from Walt Disney World," broadcast from Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, for two hours each Sunday.

5. Radio AAHS® listeners are encouraged to participate in some of the programs via a toll-free 800 number. Interactive features include the "Radio AAHS® Brain Game," which quizzes listeners on such topics as history and science; "Name That Tune"; and "Today's Amazing Fact."

6. The programming carried on Radio AAHS® is designed specifically to reach listeners aged 5-12. Many parents also listen, with and without their children. See listener comments attached hereto as Exhibit 2.

7. The continuous children's programming offered by Radio AAHS® has been nationally praised by the media. For example, attached hereto at Exhibit 3 is a sampling of clippings about the service. Radio AAHS® has also been the recipient of major awards for its unique format, including a Crystal Award from NAB for Excel-

lence in Community Service, and a proclamation from the Governor of the State of Minnesota declaring "Radio AAHS® Day". See Exhibit 4.

8. Finding the financial support to maintain the service provided by Radio AAHS® has proven to be a constant challenge. It is difficult to demonstrate the commercial viability of a children's programming format to advertisers, primarily due to lack of industry-accepted ratings of children's listening habits.

9. The Commission's NPRM expressly recognizes that ratings tabulations provide the "primary mechanism for assessing demand" in the broadcast market, and that

... the absence of a market-based mechanism for registering intensity of preference can result in a critical loss of programming.

NPRM at para. 53. Presently no national company regularly measures radio listening by children. The Arbitron radio rating system generally does not include listeners younger than 12^{2/}. Moreover, advertisers have traditionally been skeptical about the buying power of children, who generally must funnel their purchasing preferences through their parents. Although CBC has developed a program to attempt to educate advertising agencies and industry leaders about the attractiveness of programming for children, Radio AAHS® thus far has barely been sustained through commercial advertising sales.

10. Furthermore, Radio AAHS® is keenly sensitive to the Commission's concerns regarding the potential psychological impact

^{2/}However, a special 1993 Arbitron survey of the Minneapolis market found that 91% of all children listen to radio. The Radio AAHS toll-free 800 number receives more than 2 million calls annually.

of broadcast advertising on youngsters. Thus, CBC voluntarily limits advertising inventory to 10 minutes per hour, and publishes optional advertising guidelines for its affiliates which discourage accepting spots that are inappropriate for children.

11. CBC respectfully submits that existing children's radio services, such as Radio AAHS®, could be preserved by emancipating children's radio broadcasters from dependence solely on advertising sales for sustenance. This objective could be served by expanding the Commission's program sponsorship proposal to promote sponsorship of children's programming on radio.

12. The NPRM proposes a plan that, concomitant with the establishment of a minimum amount of children's programming required of television licensees, would:

... give licensees the option of either themselves airing the entire prescribed amount of children's programming, or airing a portion of the prescribed amount themselves and taking responsibility for the remainder by providing financial or other "in-kind" support for programming aired on other stations in their market.

CBC believes that the public interest would be served by allowing television stations to likewise satisfy their minimum programming obligations by supporting radio broadcasts specifically designed to educate and inform children, such as the fare presently available on stations carrying Radio AAHS®.


13. Expansion of program sponsorship to radio would be an important mechanism to preserve a type of children's broadcasting that provides a quality alternative to television-watching. The NPRM recognizes the inordinate period that some children spend

before their television sets. NPRM at para. 9. The public interest would be well-served by ensuring access to specially-designed children's programming on radio as well as television.

WHEREFORE, the premises considered, Children's Broadcasting Corporation respectfully requests the Commission to adopt program sponsorship procedures as described herein.

Respectfully submitted,

CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING CORPORATION

By 
Gregg P. Skall
Ellen S. Mandell
Its Attorneys

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Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 296-0600
October 16, 1995

IN TUNE WITH TODAY'S FAMILIES

Listener Comments

"I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR THE EXCELLENT BROADCASTING THAT YOU PROVIDE. I PLAY YOUR STATION FOR MY PRESCHOOL CLASS AND AS A TEACHER, I APPRECIATE THE ENCOURAGING MESSAGES THAT YOU ARE SENDING OUT TO THE CHILDREN AND THAT EVERYTHING IS ON THE CHILD'S LEVEL. YOUR STATION IS VERY SPECIAL AND UNIQUE."

-Janet Lux
Brea, CA

"I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR BEING SO ENCOURAGING AND SETTING SUCH A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR CHILDREN. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!"

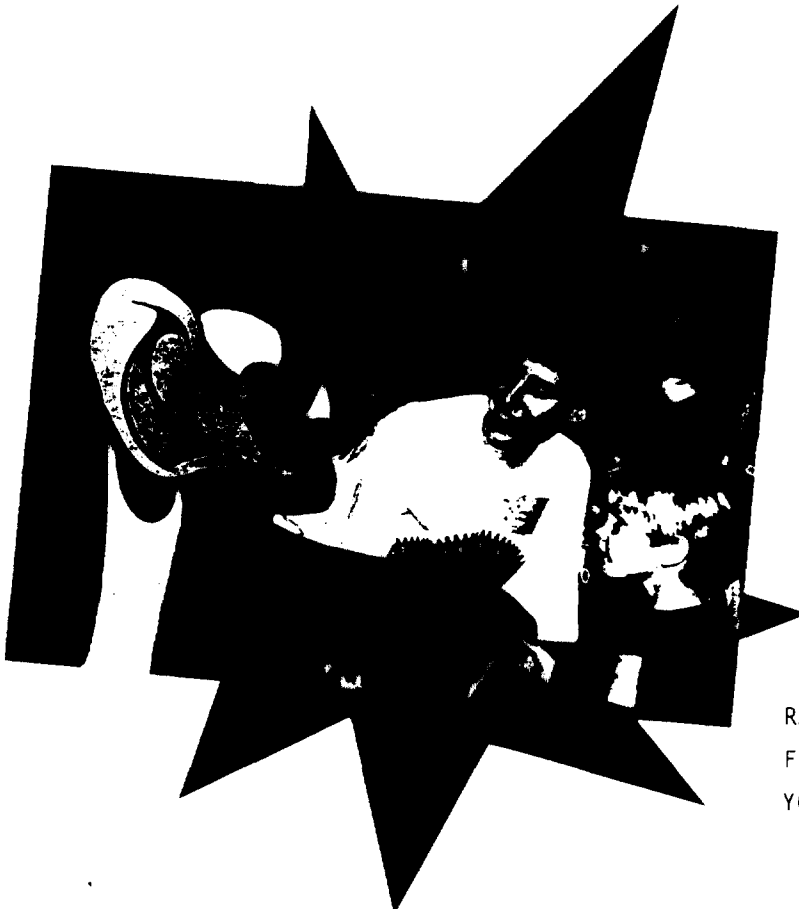
-Kathi Villarino
Placentia, CA

"AS MAYOR OF FORT WORTH, I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND RADIO AAHS® FOR HOSTING A POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING STATION GEARED TOWARD THE CHILDREN OF OUR COMMUNITY. RADIO AAHS® SHOWS CHILDREN THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT, AND THAT OUR COMMUNITY CARES ABOUT THEIR NEEDS."

-Kay Granger,
Mayor, Fort Worth, TX

"RADIO AAHS® IS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ON THE RADIO."

-Stasia Herrera
Kansas City, MO



RADIO AAHS® V.P. OF FUN JIMMY FREEMAN INTRODUCES A NEW YORK YOUNGSTER TO AAHSIE™.



Asian
Star
Teresa
Teng
Mourned
By Fans

SEE PAGE 3

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT

MAY 20, 1995

Radio AAHS Proves Network For Children Can Succeed

RADIO AAHS, the 24-hour children's radio network, celebrates its fifth anniversary this month, much to the surprise of industry observers, who have watched several other children's radio networks come and go.

Since its debut on flagship WWTC Minneapolis in 1990, Radio AAHS has landed 27 affiliates in such major markets as Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Dallas; teamed with heavyweights Time Warner and Disney; and is now on the brink of turning a profit.

"The fact that we're still here after five years, when at three years many said we couldn't do it, is pretty comforting to me," says Christopher Dahl, president of Radio AAHS parent company Children's Broadcasting Corp. "It's gone from one affiliate and coverage of 1% of the country to almost 30% of the country. By the end of the year, we expect to have 43%-45% of the country."

Meanwhile, both Time Warner and Disney approached Dahl about working together. He teamed up with Time Warner to publish the network's monthly magazine and with Disney to create two weekend shows, "Disneyland Live" and "Live From Walt Disney World."

Dahl, who studied at the Harvard Business School of Advanced Management and describes himself as a "deal-oriented kind of guy," fashioned his approach to developing a radio network after the television industry rather than the radio business.

"Radio broadcasting is very short-sighted; if a format doesn't work in 18 months, they move on," says Dahl. "This is a pioneering effort, and we know it's going to take money and time. MTV took a number of years. We knew we had to be closer to the model of a TV network as opposed to traditional radio."

"One of the things we're doing is what [Rupert Murdoch] did with Fox: capture the kids audience first, then branch out," he continues. "Turner did it with the Cartoon Network and Viacom with Nickelodeon."

Dahl won't comment specifically about the company's expansion plans, but he does say that he has five or six major deals in development and sees TV in the company's future. He also sees the company's record label, Planet AAHS, branching out via a major deal in the next year. For now, the label only releases compilation CDs through the magazine.

Dahl's radio background includes the creation of broadcast group

now owns 19 stations in the upper Midwest and Hawaii. In 1990, he formed Children's Broadcasting Corp. to buy WWTC and start Radio AAHS. Dahl's plan was to prove that a format geared toward children could work on a local level before inking other affiliates.

Two years after its debut on WWTC-AM, KIDR Phoenix came on board, followed by stations in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Orlando, Fla., Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C. Out of the network's 27 affiliates, 19 are in the top 50 markets.

Noticing that few of the 11,000 or so radio stations in the country catered to listeners under the age of 12, Dahl felt Radio AAHS would fill an important void.

"This industry has totally overlooked this audience," he says. "I grew up with radio and knew what it did to me and how powerful it was. I never felt that kids would react any differently to it. I raised two boys, and when they turned 10, 11,

13, I saw them starting to listen to radio like I did."

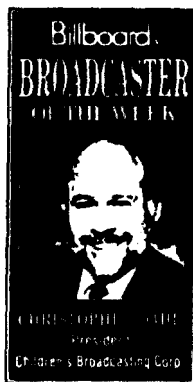
Dahl says the bulk of Radio AAHS listeners are between the ages of 5 and 10.

In addition to the weekend Disney shows, Radio AAHS features such programs as "Storytime," which programs classic stories read by jocks and celebrities; "The Radio AAHS Countdown," a top 20 children's music show; and "Evening Theatre," which aims for an older audience with a presentation of fairy tales, history, and adventure stories.

The network features a team of 20 kid DJs known as the Radio AAHS AirForce, including its 15-year-old VP of fun, Jimmy Freeman. The newest team member is the costumed cat AAHSIE, Radio AAHS' first mascot, who will be used at events and remotes.

A typical hour of music on Radio AAHS offers tunes like Jason Weaver's "I Just Can't Wait To Be King"; the Chipmunks and Alan Jackson's "Don't Rock The Jukebox"; Boyz II Men's "Thank You"; Tom Chapin's "The Missing Parade"; Dennis Hysom's "When The Wolf Comes Knockin'"; Kermit & Miss Piggy's duet "She Drives Me Crazy"; and Little Texas' version of "Help."

Says Dahl, "A lot of upfront money goes into this. When we're done, the total investment will be north of \$30 million. We will be making money toward the end of the year or next year, and once that happens, it will become quite profitable."



Running Radio

**Your Guide to
Production
Libraries**
See pp. 37-39

Your Resource for Business, Programming & Sales

Radio Aahs Programming Child's Play

by Alan Haber

SILVER SPRING, Md. Nine-and-a-half year old Michael Shevitz is on the "Tour du Jour" this morning. He and his classmates are watching mega-cool DJ Kenny Curtis strut his stuff behind the microphones of Radio Aahs affiliates WKDB, WKDL and WKDV, three AM stations serving the Baltimore, Washington and Northern Virginia areas, respectively (WKDL is the originating station; the others are repeaters, but with local IDs and commercials).

Michael is this morning's guest DJ. And he has done a great job. Kenny thanks him for coming out to the station. "And we are going to take you out," he says, excitedly, "with a song that you requested to hear. From the soundtrack of the motion picture Free William—Willie to his friends, of course—this is Michael Jackson, asking the question, 'Will You Be There.' And the answer is, 'Yes, you

will.' He addresses Michael, star DJ of the day. "Way to go, duuuude!"

The music starts to play, and Kenny talks it up: "Great music for great kids, in the Radio Zone—1570, 1460 and 1050 on your AM radio (a show biz pause) thing."

Just your average wacky DJ doing his average wacky thing—for kids.

The Radio Zone

The "All-American Alarm Clock" show, heard weekday mornings 6-11 a.m., is unique among the programs carried by the 27 stations in the 24-hour-a-day Radio Aahs children's radio network. Although the other affiliates carry the network's Alarm Clock show, WKDB, WKDL and WKDV carry a locally-originated version, hosted by Curtis and sidekick Susan Huber (network programming is carried the rest of the day and night).

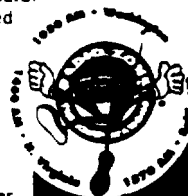
Kids programming has worked out well for the three stations, the oldest of which is just over two years old. Joan Homa

Schultz, the stations' general manager, is thrilled with the progress so far. "I think we have made tremendous ground when you figure that we just started totally from scratch," she said. Schultz estimated the three stations' audience to be more than 200,000 people—both kids and adults—a week.

Families, in other words, "I feel like we have a focus group every single solitary day," said Schultz. Parents "cannot wait to come in and they will stay in here and talk to you for 15 minutes," and say "I just let you know what I think about your radio station, how much I love it. You know, I listen all the time. I drop my kids off at day care or at school, and I'm on my way to work, and I am all the way downtown and I'm still listening to your radio station."

A local presence, in the form of the locally-produced morning show, was important, according to Schultz. "Radio

has always had its best results in a grass roots community-type outreach," she said. "We just want this to be a family community radio station." From a sales and business standpoint, she added, "It is absolutely critical to be able to have live promotions, giveaways, kids calling in, so that they are not just calling in to the 800 number of the Radio Aahs network." Advertising, which has been growing steadily for the stations, is diverse: everything from kids-oriented accounts to the more traditional types—banking, automotive, healthcare, and performing arts institutions, for example.

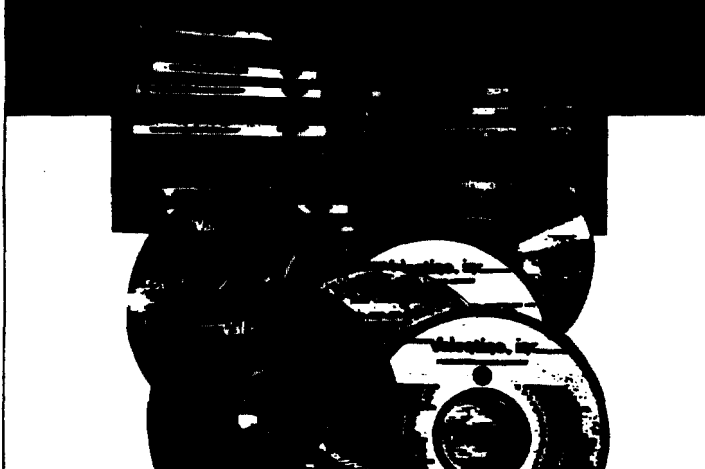


DJ-in-training Michael Shevitz

Kids are part of the on-air mix. For example, movie reviews and reviews of the circus, even of restaurants, are done by kids. "Kids love listening to other kids," said Schultz.

continued on page 34 ►

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THE BENCHMARK **it** IN BROADCASTING

Radio for Children

► continued from page 32

All kinds of music (and artists) are played on the All-American Alarm Clock show—everything from rock to country and classical, from lots of Motown to, say, a selection from "The Lion King" movie soundtrack. Parents "love that we are exposing their kids to different things," said Schultz, "in a very non-educational, non-hey-kid-you-are-learning-something-here (way)."

The music does not necessarily have to be geared specifically toward kids, but, said Curtis, the music has to be "content appropriate... We have a line... We don't want to cross the line too much, but, at the same time, we don't want to be too goody-goody either." The last thing a kid wants to listen to is music

that's supposed to be for kids, he added.

The biggest challenge, said Curtis, is programming for the wide age range of the audience, which stretches from about four to 14. "My target audience in this show is a family stuck in a car," he said. "The idea is a radio station that can give them everything they need and want in one morning without changing the station," including traffic, weather and sports, which is delivered by, not coincidentally, a kid, who Curtis said is hilarious. He remembered a line the kid spoke: "'The Bullets stink, let's face it.' I mean, you would think the kid was 50 the way he talks," he said. "It is hysterical."

The stations run a lot of contests, but, according to Schultz, "the winning is

the right answer... If it was coming from Mom and Dad, saying 'Go to the atlas, go to the dictionary,' I mean, forget it. Because we say it as media, it is cool, and that is something else that... is not lost on the parent, that we are all working on this project together."

Kenny Curtis, wacky morning DJ cutup, is a natural behind the mic, relating to kids on the air and in the studio as

fun he is having. Amazingly, this is his first radio gig, but it is not his first kids-oriented job—Curtis spent five years hosting a kids' TV show on the Fox TV affiliate in Baltimore. Bright and bubbly co-host Susan Huber has been on the show since November 1993.

Having local personalities on the morning show is a good thing, said Curtis: "You have got your own human marketing tool. That way you

have a personality to send to

places, and it is easier to sell because you can do contests and promotions that are live. As long as you are taking cues from the network, and there is a consistency in programming, it is okay."

Programming the station is more of a collaborative than an individual effort, said Program Director Dan Turner. "This (format) is unique because it has never been done before, and that is what attracted me to it," he said. "I look at children's radio, really, as the last bastion of creativity in radio."

The "All-American Alarm Clock Show" and, for that matter, Radio Aahs, goes down like a great, magic breakfast. Magic, in fact, may well be an integral element in the fabric of cut-up Curtis and his show. Legerdemain was, in fact, integral to a segment of today's Tour du Jour.

After turning the kids into chipmunks with the help of some production sleight-of-hand, the cheerful host asked the kids if they knew how he achieved the trick. "Was it magic or was it a machine?" he asked. "Machine!" came the cry back from the kids.

"Yeah," said Curtis, perhaps a bit dejected at the response. "Nobody says magic anymore." Except, that is, for the listeners, perhaps.



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CONNECTING THE WORLD

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

© 1995 The Dallas Morning News

Dallas, Texas, Tuesday, May 16, 1995

5 Sections

H

25 Cents



Gretchen Vawter, 13, and Eric Roberts, 16, are teen DJs for KAHZ-AM, a Hurst-based affiliate of Radio Aahs.

The burgeoning Land of Aahs

Young radio network is fast becoming a powerful force in the children's entertainment industry

By Holly Williams
Special Contributor
to The Dallas Morning News

Radio Aahs, like many of its listeners, is only 5 years old.

But already the national radio network, run by Children's Broadcasting Corp. of Minneapolis (one station, KAHZ-AM, is big for its age).

With five stations owned and operated by the corporation and more than a dozen affiliates airing 24-hour

programming aimed at kids 12 and younger, Radio Aahs is making a mark on the children's entertainment industry.

"We are branding kids radio like Nickelodeon has branded children's television," says Chris Dahl, president of Children's Broadcasting Corp.

In March, in conjunction with Warner Music Enterprises of Time Warner Inc., Radio Aahs spawned its own glossy magazine that costs \$3.95 a month and comes with a compact disc of the top 10 hits in kids music.

As a marketing tool for the station, advertisers and the children's music industry in general, the magazine and accompanying CD pack a punch. Initial subscriptions were 50,000, and corporation officials expect that number to quintuple by the end of the year.

"The response has been Please see KIDS on Page 6C.



Gretchen does a live broadcast from a festival in Las Colinas.

WHERE TO FIND RADIO AAHS

Tune to KAHZ-AM (1360) for peppy songs by children's entertainers, movie soundtracks, oldies, story times and call-in sessions. The station, the Hurst affiliate of Children's Broadcasting Corp., inserts several hours of local programming featuring local teen DJs every week.



Radio Aahs produces a magazine for its young listeners.

Photography by Ariane Kadoch

Kids' radio network aims to educate, entertain

Continued from Page 5C.

phenomenal" Mr. Dahl says.

Most of the Radio Aahs programming, which includes peppy songs by children's entertainers, movie soundtracks, oldies, story times and call-in sessions, comes via satellite from Minneapolis. Like other Aahs affiliates, the Hurst station (KAHJ-AM 1360) inserts several hours of local programming every week featuring teen disc jockeys.

Our City, Our Children, one of the locally produced programs, airs for an hour on alternate Monday evenings; a recent guest was Fort Worth Mayor Kay Granger.

Up to eight minutes each hour of Radio Aahs programming is reserved for local advertising, promotions and information updates such as sports, weather and traffic reports. Two minutes per hour is devoted to national advertising.

"All the songs are very positive," says Stacey Archip of Arlington, whose children — Dana, 11, and Jason, 7 — are regular listeners. She discovered the station from an ad in a shopping circular.

"Before Aahs came along, we didn't know much about kids' music performers. There was no way to listen to them. Now my children are more interested in buying music by Joe Scruggs than they are the hard-rock stuff."

Ms. Archip says her family members consider themselves Aahs groupies, attending live remote sessions when the station broadcasts from various locales in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"The Aahs people always make time to talk to my kids," she says. "That means a lot, especially to my son, who loves to press buttons and get in on things."

The station also provides an opportunity for aspiring young DJs to practice their craft.

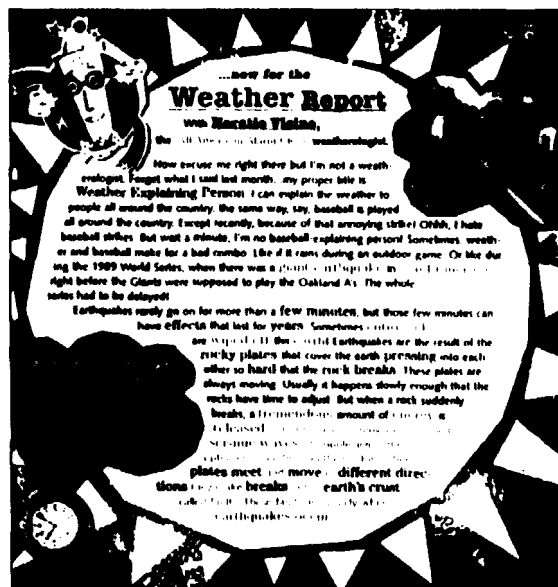
Gretchen Vawter, a 13-year-old student at Monnig Middle School in Fort Worth, enjoys the few hours per week she spends on the air.

"I know there are people out there listening," she says, "and I mostly just want them to have fun with us."

Her on-air partner, Eric Roberts, a 16-year-old junior at Paschal High School in Fort Worth, plans to pursue a career in sports radio.

"This looks great on the resumé," he says. "I think I've definitely got a head start when it comes to maybe working at a college station. Plus, hey, we get paid. It's great."

The Dallas-Fort Worth station has a full-time on-site staff of five. It



The Radio Aahs magazine costs \$3.95 a month and comes with a compact disc of the top 10 hits in kids' music.



among five stations nationwide.

Along with the growth of children's radio and Radio Aahs come questions of accountability about

ate and "educational" radio.

Radio Aahs has come up with its own definitions.

third of our audience is parents, most of whom are driving in a car with their children when they listen to us."

"No one gives us a handbook about children's programming," he adds. "We are inventing the model here. And we are becoming a spokesperson for kids' values."

Radio Aahs officials say they believe the need now is clearly growing for family- and child-oriented programming on a 24-hour basis. They cite their connections with Time Warner, as well as weekend broadcasts from both Disneyland in California and Walt Disney World in Florida, as proof of the growing interest.

Arbitron, the radio equivalent to television's Nielsen ratings, does not rate audiences 12 years and younger. But a 1993 Arbitron survey in the Minneapolis market found that 91 percent of all children listen to radio, and that 51 percent of that listening is done in the car.

Children's television has come under close scrutiny in recent years from educational institutions, research groups and children's advocacy organizations.

But some experts say that children's radio, with virtually no federal guidelines or regulation, has slipped through the cracks.

"The primary concern these days comes from TV," says Diane Conley, of the Policy & Rules Division of the Federal Communications Commission. "As far as I am aware, no one has raised radio as an issue for regulation."

Ellen Wartella, dean and endowed professor of the communications school at the University of Texas at Austin, agrees that most of the focus has been toward "television and new technologies — video games, software, that sort of thing."

"But Radio Aahs is an advertiser-driven station," says Ms. Wartella, who has written and lectured about the explosion in youth-oriented marketing strategies. "And that means it's another example of the commercialization of our children's culture."

Aahs executives don't quite see it that way.

"We are out on the cutting edge," says Gary Landis, the Minneapolis-based executive vice president of programming, who is responsible for most of what goes out over the air nationally on Radio Aahs.

"What we've attempted to do," he says, "is establish a commercial enterprise that doesn't hold out its hand to government. People point

toys 'R' Us."

Radio Aahs perceives itself as self-regulating, favorably comparing its hourly advertising of a maximum of 10 minutes with television's 10.11 minutes.

And, officials say, the company publishes advertising guidelines for its affiliates that discourage ads for alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, movies with a rating other than G or PG and products deemed to be of "poor quality" or "with violence, rudeness or name calling." The guidelines are optional, however, and rely on each affiliate's discretion.

Regardless of the direction the children's radio market takes or the potential scrutiny, Radio Aahs officials say they have had a significant impact in five years.

"We want to acquire more stations," Mr. Dahl says. "Our next step is for the company to purchase stations in New York and Chicago. We already have one in L.A."

APRIL 11, 1995

BACON'S

3823

At KIDR (740 AM), they're ...

KIDDING AROUND ON THE RADIO

TONY BLEV Tribune

Lydia Bautista, 10, is one of five Valley children hired as part of KIDR (740 AM) Radio AirForce.

Radio

From Page A1

"If I stay in the entertainment business, like as an actor, this will help, because I have to learn to talk clearly," she said.

And she does.

Each member of the AirForce is given "assignments" for the shows they do with Miller. He operates all the radio equipment and focuses the two-hour local programs, which air 3 to 5 p.m. daily.

The AirForce members are brought into the show to offer information, reviews, previews, talk to other youngsters on the telephone and converse with Miller.

Within two or three weeks, the programs will go live. For now, they are taped.

Miller, of Mesa, has the responsibility of being a teacher and a disc jockey at the same time.

"I have to teach them what I do, and work with them so they can be good on-air personalities," Miller said.

Miller was hired last fall by KIDR. That was when the station finally began to insert local elements into the nationally delivered programming.

"It's kind of evolved from there, and it still is evolving," said Miller. "We literally are creating as we are going."

Miller first became involved with Radio AAHS in a part-time

position at a station in Orange County, Calif. He moved to Arizona in November 1993, but couldn't find a radio job, so he played club DJ and waited tables at the Black Angus in Mesa.

At 25, he said he believes he was hired because the station wants to keep its young sound.

"I have a younger voice, a younger presentation and a relatability," he said.

This ability to relate could be the influence of his wife, Carrie, who teaches sixth-graders.

"I think that is a big thing, because this is not just a radio format for us, it is a lifestyle," said Miller, who added that he and his wife will become parents for the first time in September.

Miller knows he must be patient with the youngsters.

"Like with anyone, they are in awe of what is going on the first time they are in the studio. So the first thing I try to do is make them comfortable. Make them feel as if we are just hanging around and having a good time."

He knows what the children are seeing is new to them, but he said he wants them to understand it all.

"We've been doing this now for six or seven weeks, and they now know everything that is going on," Miller said. "There are no surprises. If there is something I am doing they don't know, they will speak up and ask."

On this day, Bautista was very

relaxed. As Miller taped information of some upcoming events, she naturally ad-libbed with him. Then, when he pointed to her, she read an announcement that had been written for her.

When the tape machine acted up, she quite naturally began asking Miller what could have happened.

"I don't want them to feel they are infringing on the adults here," Miller said.

One way the station does this is by treating the children the same as any other employee, Powers said.

Each one gets paid and is required to do all the personnel paper work any employee would.

But some of what is required did come as a surprise - at least for Bautista.

Some of the work Miller requires is for the members of the AirForce to review movies, or attend functions and then come back and give a report to their listeners.

Sometimes, the reports are of news events. And sometimes, the reports are on something fun. For example, the station sent Bautista to Sea World on Friday.

Plus, she now has to deal with her celebrity status at school, Tumbleweed Elementary.

"No one treats me much differently," she said. "Some will come up to me and ask me what it is like, and every Wednesday the teacher tries to bring a radio into the room so we can listen to my show. But sometimes we can't because there is too much work in class."

"I'm trying not to brag too

much," she said. "I'm trying to just stay cool."

Bautista said reporting is not the only KIDR "homework" she does. She also practices her enunciation.

"My gram has a microphone, so I practice," she said. "I'm trying not to make pops with my P's."

So the work is not just the two hours per week in the studio with Miller. And Powers expects even more. He said that when KIDR participates in community events, the young DJs are asked to appear. They also may be asked at times to speak to school classes or groups. "We also would like to tie them to various kids' charities," he added.

The one downside is that Powers does want to involve more children. He knows that a youngster's attention span could interfere with keeping them at the station.

"For now, we'll go quarter by quarter, maybe longer, to see how things go," Powers said. "What we want to do is give other kids an opportunity to experience this. But if we have a couple of kids who turn out to be dynamite talents, we'll keep them and expand our AirForce."

If new children are needed, the station will do open auditions again, he added.

"We would like to give other kids a chance," Miller said. "But that would mean we would have to start at square one again. Any time you train good employees,

The Des Moines Register

DES MOINES, IOWA • TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1995 • PRICE 35 CENTS



Stephanie Watson, 16, a part-time disc jockey for Radio AAHS, is one of about 20 kids known as the "Air Force."

Radio networking especially for kids

Des Moines' KKSQ-AM is carrying round-the-clock commercial programming aimed at children 12 and younger.

By MELINDA VOSS
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Minneapolis, Minn. — The "All-American Alarm Clock" on WWTC-AM here is no ordinary morning drive-time radio show.

Besides weather reports, listeners hear knock-knock jokes, definitions of words like "debacle" and songs like "She Drives Me Crazy" by Kermit and Miss Piggy.

No, this isn't public radio.

It's a commercial radio network that offers children's programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And beginning at 12:01 a.m. today, Des Moines' KKSQ-AM (1390 on the dial), formerly a country music station, joins the network.

Called Radio AAHS (as in aahs and aahs), WWTC is the flagship station for the Children's Satellite Network beamed coast-to-coast from a former bank building on the outskirts of Minneapolis.

Aimed at children 12 and younger, Radio AAHS delivers music, news, jokes, brain teasers, talk, stories and information. Among its more lofty goals: building children's self-esteem and enhancing communication between family members.

A toll-free 800 number assures plenty of interplay between listeners and ever-cheerful disc jockeys, some of whom are kids.

In the emerging world of kids' radio programming, Radio AAHS holds a lot of promise: a spot on the radio dial that kids can call their own, a new marketing medium for child-oriented products and services and a national stage for the growing number of artists who produce children's music.

Founder Christopher Dahl, 51, knows the power of radio for

Teens are DJs and hosts for kid radio programs

Minneapolis, Minn. — Stephanie Watson may have the best job in the world for a 15-year-old.

Twice a week, she co-hosts a show on WWTC-AM, also known as Radio AAHS, a station here devoted solely to kids.

Sitting in the radio booth one cloudy March afternoon, Watson introduces records, handles calls from all over the country and banters with her co-hosts.

Watson uses a professional, upbeat voice. Callers light the phone board in response to that hour's "Brain Game" question: "What type of scientific instrument is used to detect small things?"

She handles the callers deftly. "It's a microscope, but you have to know what kind of microscope," she tells one caller who doesn't come up with the right answer. About 200,000 calls a month come in on the station's toll-free number.

Between callers, Watson talks with co-hosts Allyson Kearns, 11, and Don Michaels, an adult disc jockey. This day, Kearns repeatedly runs her tongue over her teeth because she has just had her braces removed. Michaels kudos her about it, and she makes a face at him.

Eventually, Watson hears from a caller who has the right answer: the electron microscope. Winners receive compact discs and stuffed animals.

During the next hour, Radio AAHS listeners hear a

WATSON Please turn to Page 27

Kid radio appeals to parents

RADIO

Continued from Page 17

youngsters; he grew up engrossed with "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon" and "Sky King."

"I went to bed with the radio and woke up with the radio," says the president of the Children's Broadcasting Corp.

Radio AAHS is not the first kids' radio programming in the Des Moines area. Two years ago, KDPS-FM (88 on the dial), run by the Des Moines public schools, started "Kids' Radio Mania," four hours of kids programming that air Saturday mornings during the school year. Stephen Winzenburg, a Grand View College communications professor who helped start Kids Radio Mania, says he welcomes Radio AAHS because it's good for kids. Dahl says the round-the-clock programming of the Children's Satellite Network reflects his commitment to kids. Though most of them slumber during the wee hours, Radio AAHS is there for kids who wake up at 2 a.m. with a tummyache.

Dahl understands that children's radio will not replace television in young people's lives, but he also knows it doesn't have to. Half of all radio listening is done in cars, he points out. And 91 percent of kids (compared to 96 percent of adults) already listen to the radio.

Dahl knows, too, that Radio AAHS must please parents as well. Parents, after all, are usually the first to acquaint their children with the station. Once kids are hooked, however,

Radio AAHS is there for kids who wake up at 2 a.m. with a tummyache.

parents better find it tolerable — at the least — and preferably entertaining as well.

Appealing to parents is not as hard as it sounds, says Gary Landis, executive vice president for programming. Many adult songs — Mariah Carey's "Anytime I Need a Friend," or Rod Stewart's "We're Having a Party" — work for kids, too, he says. The surprise for Landis is that more than half of the parent listeners tune to the station without their kids, according to station research.

Dahl and Landis also recognize that serving children requires a special philosophy for programming and advertising.

Skeptical parents may wonder whether a commercial radio station for kids is just one more opportunity to exploit malleable minds. But according to the network's mission statement, the company will

serve in a "thoughtful and caring way," and will act as an advocate for children.

Landis says Radio AAHS avoids the sappy, overstated sweetness that some critics associate with Barney, the preschooler's hero. But Landis doesn't view the station as strictly a public service.

"We're an entertainment medium that happens to educate. We're not an education medium that entertains. We're about the business of stealth education. We want to do it in a way that's fun and entertaining," he says.

A dozen or so reporters, ages 11 to 17, give on-air reports about computers, travel, health and safety, science and space, toys and games, entertainment and books.

Currently, Sunita Held, 12, of Gold- en Valley, Minn. reports weekly on

Tragic events are handled with children's needs in mind.

Mayaquest, a three-month bicycle expedition by adventurer Dan Buettner and his team of investigators. They're traveling through the Mayan world of Guatemala, Mexico, Belize and Honduras. Held receives faxes from the expedition's home base and uses an on-line service to gather information. She also has interviewed Buettner a couple times.

News reports air seven times each weekday and four times on Saturday and Sunday, says P.J. Gudmundson, director of news, information and education.

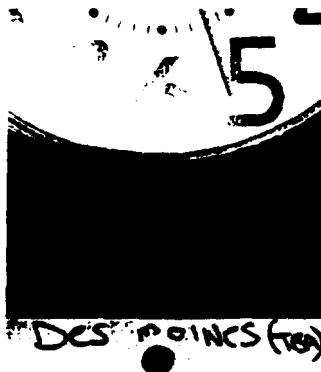
"Over the years, we have learned to respect kids for their ability to grasp information and news events," she says. "When we started, our news was probably softer, but our presentation has gotten more sophisticated."

Tragic events — like mass starvation in Rwanda, the plane crash in Philadelphia and the Waco, Texas disaster — are handled with children's needs in mind, says Liv Learner, 20, who coordinates news coverage.

"We're there to explain it, but somehow we find an angle that's not depressing," she says. In the case of the starving Rwandans, Learner told about relief agencies' efforts and how kids could donate money to them.

Advertising on a kids' radio station raises another raft of ethical and moral issues. So far, Radio AAHS hasn't run soft-drink ads, and candy commercials are limited, says Landis. The network refused to air an action toy commercial that was violent, rejected a commercial that included the sentence, "My dad is a butthead," and declined to run a no-smoking campaign for pre-teens designed by a tobacco company.

Local affiliates don't have to follow



**LLAS/FT. WORT
TWIN CITIES
EAU CLAIRE
KANSAS CITY
TULSA (Mar 30)**

Sign shows cities that carry 24-hour kid radio.

the network's advertising guidelines, but KKSO's R. L. Caron says the Des Moines station plans to do so.

Listeners also hear less advertising — no more than 10 minutes an hour — on Radio AAHS. During children's programs, television is limited to 10% minutes an hour on the weekends and 12 minutes an hour on weekdays.

Radio AAHS' parent, the Children's Broadcasting Corp. has yet to turn a profit, but that hasn't stopped Dahl.

Since starting the Minneapolis station in 1990, he has acquired stations in Dallas, Kansas City, Denver and Los Angeles and persuaded 26 other stations to affiliate with the network. Des Moines' KKSO is the 27th station. Dahl is now raising \$20 million to buy stations in New York and Chicago. His goal is to beam Radio AAHS into the Top 100 radio markets. So far, it reaches 24.

One analyst, Pamela S. Lund, who follows the Children's Broadcasting Corp. for John G. Kinnard & Co. in Minneapolis, rated its stock as one of her top picks in 1995. She estimates the company will report its first profit ever in 1996 if it breaks into the New York and Chicago markets.

Meanwhile, backers hope Radio AAHS will become as entrenched in the lives of children as "Sesame Street." As Programming Director Landis sees it, once the first generation of Radio AAHS listeners grows up, they'll tune in for their kids.

"That's something I hope we can look forward to. That will be very powerful."

Teens are DJs and hosts

WATSON

Continued from Page 17

Keebler News for Kids report from Sin Gomsrud, 17, about staying away from poisonous substances, and "Today's Amazing Fact" — that the merry-go-round is the oldest amusement ride still in use. Listeners are also invited to "Name That Tune" and to respond to the question: What good deed have you done today?

At 6 p.m., Michaels walks out of the booth and leaves Watson and Kearns to co-host the "Just Kids" segment, which is mostly music.

Watson and Kearns are two of the network's "Air Force," on-air personalities, ages 13 to 17, who work after school and on weekends. At other times, the network uses adult DJs.

Watson is one of the original Air Force disc jockeys. Station managers recruited the youngsters from a children's theater group in Minneapolis.

She likes helping give kids a voice. "A lot of people won't listen to kids," she says. Kearns agrees and says she had to overcome some jitters when she's been on air.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR
Kansas City, MO

Circ - (E) 294,388 (S) 434,347

APRIL 7, 1995

Bacon's

3893

Hey, who are those kids on the radio? The Force

Kids Air Force does commercials and announcements.

By **BRIAN McTAVISH**
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Radio AAHS children's network affiliate **KCAZ-AM** (1480) is building its own stable of local -- and very young -- on-air personalities. Seven young people, ages 8 to 15, were enlisted this week to launch the **KCAZ Kids Air Force**. The Force's initial duties will be read-



ing commercials and public service announcements on the station. Meet them in person at a remote broadcast from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at Bannister Mall.

But that's only Phase I. The kids will participate in more radio remotes this summer, for which they'll be "paid" in Royals tickets and other freebies.

By fall the group is expected to number 20 young people who will take turns being hosts to a planned music and information program each day after school. For that they'll receive "probably the minimum wage," said Amy Layland, promotions director at KCAZ, formerly KBFA.

"These kids are going to have a lot of fun," Layland said. "It's my job to make it fun."

Layland hand-picked the group's first seven members, because, she said, "I want these kids to be my leaders. So they're my guinea pigs."

They are twin sisters Kim and Kelly O'Connell, brother and sister Jake and Trisha Hurley, Dylan Giatton, Jeremy Lync and Stacia Ri-Jon Wright. All are active in school activities, and Layland wants to keep it that way.

"We'll talk to each child and parent and find out what they want to do," she said. "We don't want the kids to spend all their

time here."

The first batch of the Kids Air Force will help Layland select future members at shopping-mall auditions over the summer.

At 23, Layland is almost a kid herself, but, she said, "I need kids to help me figure out what to do with other kids. I need them to tell me what's right and what's wrong; what's cool and what's not cool."

■ Here's something cool: The new **Radio AAHS Magazine and Music Service**. It's produced by the Children's Broadcasting Corp. in Minneapolis, owner of the **Radio AAHS** network, and Warner Music Enterprises, part of

the Warner Music Group.

Kids can get a free first copy, including a compact disc full of kids music, by calling (800) 340-7711. Postage will run about \$4.

■ Sara Campbell, a forward for the Kansas City Mustangs women's professional basketball team, will be on hand for a **Radio AAHS** remote broadcast at 2 p.m. today at **Wheatly Science/Math Magnet School**. Campbell, a two-time all-star for the **Women's Basketball Association**, is a graduate of **Central High School** and the **University of Missouri**.

Share your radio news with **Brian McTavish** by phoning 234-4766 or faxing 234-4787.



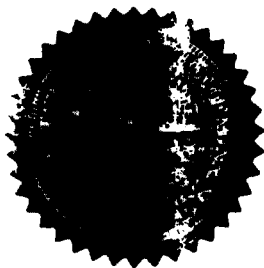
Proclamation

- WHEREAS: Children's Broadcasting/Radio AAHS' Minneapolis flagship station WWTC-AM is the only radio station providing quality programming specifically for the children and families of Minnesota; and
- WHEREAS: Nearly 100,000 Minnesota children and nearly 50,000 Minnesota parents tune in to Radio AAHS weekly; and
- WHEREAS: Radio AAHS entertains and educates Minnesota's children and families through positive multimedia programming and products; and
- WHEREAS: Radio AAHS staff participate extensively in dozens of Minnesota-based community events each year; and
- WHEREAS: Radio AAHS is responsive to the present and future needs of children in Minnesota 24 hours a day, empowering Minnesota's children and boosting their self-esteem; and
- WHEREAS: Minnesota is home to Radio AAHS, the radio phenomenon that continues to receive local and national media attention for its high quality; and
- WHEREAS: Radio AAHS continues to grow, now reaching approximately 30 percent of the U.S. population - some 12 million children under the age of 12;

NOW THEREFORE, I, ARNE H. CARLSON, Governor of the State of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim Saturday, May 13, 1995 to be

R A D I O A A H S D A Y

in Minnesota.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this thirteenth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five and of the State the one hundred and thirty-seventh.

Joan A. Grome

SECRETARY OF STATE

Arne H. Carlson

GOVERNOR



WINNER OF THE 1994
CRYSTAL RADIO AWARD

Recently, RADIO AAHS welcomed a new arrival to the Twin Cities --
The Coveted CRYSTAL RADIO AWARD For Excellence In Community Service!

The Crystal Radio Awards were established by the National Association of Broadcasters to recognize radio stations' efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities. It is the most prestigious award in Radio Broadcasting today! Of the eligible 12,692 licensed radio stations in the country, only 10 are chosen as winners. RADIO AAHS is a winner!

"RADIO AAHS has shown tremendous commitment to its community," said Bob Fox, chairman of the NAB Radio Board. Through events such as:

- *Tour de Kids Bike-A-Thon for charity*
- *Toys For St Louis Flood Victims*
- *F.U.N. Day Broadcast (Families United For Non-Violence)*
- *Variety Club Children's Hospital Broadcast*
- *Toys At Christmas*
- *RADIO AAHS Earth Day Tree Give-Away*

RADIO AAHS continually demonstrates its commitment to making the world a better place for its young listeners and their families.

RADIO AAHS--THE MOST EXCITING AND UNIQUE RADIO
STATION IN AMERICA TODAY!



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